

TAKE THE ReadPsalm119.com MEMORIZATION CHALLENGE!!

Memorization is hard work. It used to be a required part of childrens' Bible studies at church. Yet with today's technological helps at the ready, we are less inclined to commit information to memory. James 1:25 tells us that we tend toward forgetting what we have learned in God's Word and that it takes special effort to work against that trend. How can we act out what we have learned if we have forgotten it? While doing the Word (obeying it) is the primary means for helping us to remember, which is James' main point, we also are charged with "hiding" God's Word in our heart. When technology fails or my Bible is taken away from me, when I'm with a person in crisis and I'm searching for the right words to offer to encourage, God's Word tucked into my own mind is a true blessing.

One caveat: memory fades. The mind is not a static force, but is dynamic. It is important to understand that though we lose articulation after time and can't recall word-for-word what we had memorized previously, we can trust the Holy Spirit to honor His promise to bring the necessary Word back to us if we have bothered to put it in. The goal is to keep God's message to us, the Word, not just "words". What you commit to the Lord will not be in vain! God's Word will accomplish its work in us as we devote ourselves to knowing and obeying it (Isaiah 55:10-11).

Is memorization commanded? No, not necessarily. But then we must consider what it means to "treasure" the word of God, to let it "dwell in you richly" (Colossians 3:6), to "lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes" (Deut. 11:18 ESV). What does it mean that "this Book of Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, **so that** you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it" (Joshua 1:8 ESV)? to "eat" God's words (Jeremiah 15:16)? to "bind them on your heart always" (Proverbs 6:21-22)? that "the law of God is in his heart" (Psalm 37:31; Psalm 40:8)? What does it mean to "delight" in the law of God (Psalm 1:2)? In all these scriptures, memorization is a means of taking in the effectual truth of God's Word in an intimate manner. Just as we memorize the face of a loved one, so we live with the scriptures so that the image of its truth becomes stamped on our lives. We love God's Word because we love God our Savior.

On the following page are **12 Ideas for Using the Psalm 119 Memorization Pages.** After memorizing Psalm 119 together, we will proceed on to memorizing other highlighted passages—some you may already know, some may be new and a fresh challenge. God bless you as we study God's Word together!

12 IDEAS FOR USING THE PSALM 119 MEMORIZATION PAGES

We are all unique learners. We are not all visual learners, or all audial learners, or all kinesthetic learners (those who learn by doing). Some of these helps will not work and some will. Some are good for individual memorization and some are good for groups. Some are good for adults and some are better for working with children. The list is here to help you make practical steps toward the goal of memorizing.

The first step in memorizing is to meditate on the passage's meaning. Understanding will increase the more you continue to reflect on it as you memorize.

1. Oral Reading (Individual): Print the verse poster and post it in an obvious place that you will see every day. You can slip it in a frame and set it on your desk. Read it out loud *at least* once a day. Some say 50x is a good number, so the more repetitions you can do at a single recitation the better. Think about the meaning of the words and how each thought proceeds from the previous one.
2. Oral Reading (Group): Choral Reading: one person reads text, the others read key words. Switch.
2. Rhythm Reading (Children's Group): Clap and step forward together when reading key words
3. Cover and Read: Cut out colored paper rectangles to cover each key word. Only move the paper back if you need to.
4. Color code interior sections that complete a thought. This is a method called "chunking" into meaningful chunks. It uses visual cues (color) and provides the memory with a do-able, brief chunk that is less stressful and more meaningful than the whole passage at once.
5. Make flashcard key words and put in order. Lay down a card when said while reading the octrain. Number the cards. Say the octrain using only the key word cards (word or number side). See Instruction Sheet for making the Flashcards. Note: Flashcards helps with people who need visuals or manipulatives and are not audial learners.
6. Team Recitation: Have one person read or say the "Fill-in-the-Blank" page, stopping at each blank while the other person (or group) fills in the blank with recited key word. Take turns being the "blank filler" or passage reciter.
7. Sing the Passage: Using any links available to a recorded song with the passage as lyrics, play the song in the background during the day and sing with it until it begins to "haunt" the memory. Teach the song to someone, or a group!
8. Recite to a "Spotter": Give a friend the poster of the passage (or the Bible itself) and ask them to "spot" you since you are trying to memorize a passage. The spotter can help you if you forget, but the main point is that you are creating an

opportunity for yourself to "perform" the recitation. When we perform, we have more at stake and the mind works a bit harder than when we memorize alone. Preaching on the passage helps as well. The collateral benefit is that the "spotter" receives a blessing, and may want to know why you memorize and what the passage means.

9. Toss the Keyword (Children's Group): Create a circle (sitting or standing) with all the class or group. Using a large **bean bag** (avoids rolling balls) or a **ball** (if outside and physical activity is a side goal), have the group recite the passage. The person holding the bag or ball must toss to someone at the keyword and the person who catches the bag or ball must say the keyword. The whole group may correct and then the group proceeds. Do not delay if a person doesn't remember. The group should simply fill in the keyword and move on with no penalty. The goal of the activity is sealing in the passage.
In a large group, The person who said the keyword, may, alternatively, step back out of the circle and join the teacher, making the circle smaller so that there are fewer and fewer people to answer.
10. Create a Poster Picture (Children's Group): This can be a group activity leading into making flashcards. Develop simple visual representations of key concepts in the passage (short passage chunks) to post in the classroom or to bring out each class time for memorization cues.
11. Say-Along (Group or Individual): Use the downloadable recording or create your own. Play the recording on a "loop" (automatic repeating cycle). Say along with the recording. When making your own audio, give emphasis to meaningful phrases; pauses and rhythms can further "chunk" for easier recall.
12. Teach the Passage (Group or Individual): Use the passage in a sermon, or class study, or written work (blog post, e-mail newsletter, essay, etc.). The teacher is always the one who learns the most!